

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 02887 161536Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----113695 161545Z /46

O 161500Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5443
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO

S E C R E T RABAT 2887

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, CG, MO
SUBJ: POTENTIAL FOR MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE

REF: A. RABAT 2883; B. RABAT 2865

1. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL B, GOM IS NOT LIKELY TO SEND
MILITARY FORCES TO ZAIRE. INDEED WE HAD AN AUTHORITATIVE
INDICATION IN MID-MARCH THAT MOROCCO WOULD NOT AGAIN
COMMIT SUCH FORCES IN ZAIRE WITHOUT SUPPORT AND
PARTICIPATION FROM OTHER AFRICAN STATES AND THE WEST.
THE 1,200 TROOPS SENT TO SHABA IN APRIL, 1977 WERE

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COMMITTED ON A ONE-TIME ONLY BASIS FOR A LIMITED
MISSION, WHICH WAS COMPLETED BY MID-JUNE 1977. ALL
COMBAT TROOPS WERE WITHDRAWN, THOUGH PERHAPS 10-20
MILITARY ADVISERS ARE BELIEVED TO REMAIN. MOROCCO'S
ARMED FORCES ARE CURRENTLY HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE
SAHARA. ABOUT 10,000 TROOPS ARE STATIONED IN
MAURITANIA, MOST OF THEM COMMITTED IN THE LAST YEAR,

AND APPROXIMATELY 30,000 MEN ARE IN THE MOROCCAN PORTION OF THE SAHARA. THIS INVOLVEMENT HAS ALREADY PUT HEAVY STRAIN ON THE ARMED FORCES AND THE ECONOMY.

2. MOROCCO MIGHT BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE AT LEAST SYMBOLICALLY IN SOME SORT OF ASSISTANCE SHORT OF PROVIDING TROOPS, E.G. ARMS, DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT OF ENHANCED TRAINING, FOR THERE IS A VERY REAL AWARENESS HERE THAT ZAIRE IS A KEY BUTTRESS AGAINST THE SOVIET INCURSIONS INTO AFRICA SO FEARED BY THE GOM. WHAT-EVER IS BEING CONSIDERED, THE REACTION OF THE WESTERN POWERS, SUCH AS FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, AND OF OTHER AFRICAN MODERATES WILL ALSO BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR. FRENCH PLANES AND MONETARY AID WERE VITAL TO MOROCCO'S EARLIER INVOLVEMENT IN ZAIRE, WHILE EGYPT'S AID SAVED MOROCCO FROM BEING THE ONLY AFRICAN COUNTRY INVOLVED. EVEN WITH THIS SUPPORT, HOWEVER, THE GOM WAS UNEASY WITH THE MINIMAL PARTICIPATION BY BLACK AFRICAN STATES.

3. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN MOROCCAN THINKING WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE US APPROACH AND KING HASSAN WILL ONCE AGAIN LOOK TO THE US TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP OF WESTERN INTERESTS HE BELIEVES NECESSARY TO COUNTER AFRICA'S LEFTWARD DRIFT. HE WILL RECALL, HOWEVER, THAT IN 1977 OUR INITIAL REACTION TO HIS INTERVENTION
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WAS FOCUSED SOLELY ON THE POSSIBLE USE OF US-ORIGIN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND ONLY TURNED TO PUBLIC PRAISE AFTER IT HAD PROVED A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS.

4. CLEARLY IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH THE MOROCCANS, SENSITIZED THOUGH THEY ARE BY OUR CURRENT BILATERAL DIFFICULTIES OVER USE OF OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE IN THE SAHARA AND MAURITANIA. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE, THESE DISCUSSION WOULD BE WARMLY WELCOMED AND MIGHT PROVE USEFUL.
ANDERSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RABAT02887
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780206-0888
Format: TEL
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780554/aaaabtlr.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0d493e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 RABAT 2883, 78 RABAT 2865
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2677718
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POTENTIAL FOR MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE
TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, MILI, CG, MO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0d493e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014